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ABSTRACT

The study of the future has grown into a valued tool for business planners, government, and nongovernmental organizations, as well as for many areas of the social sciences. Yet despite the need for reporters and editors who can inject foresight into the news--and despite studies showing that the disciplined use of "futures thinking" not only can be a useful tool for journalists in a rapidly changing world, but a vital one--the use of futures studies in the teaching of journalism and mass communications is found to be an underused resource. The time is ripe for rethinking curricular change. Hendrickson and Tankard (1997), for example, are exploring classroom techniques for using general systems theory. According to their research "Teaching future reporters to think of news events and issues in systems terms may be one approach to expanding the news frame." (Contains 40 references; an appendix outlines a proposed course, "Journalism and the Future.") (NKA)

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'Professors of Foresight': Finding a Place for the Future in Journalism Curricula

Abstract: The study of the future has grown into a valued tool for business planners, government and non-government organizations, and many areas of the social sciences. Yet despite the need for reporters and editors who can inject foresight into the news -- and despite studies showing that the disciplined use of "futures thinking" not only can be a useful tool for journalists in a rapidly changing world, but a vital one -- the use of futures studies in the teaching of journalism and mass communications is found to be an underused resource.

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'Professors of Foresight': Finding a Place for the Future in Journalism Curricula

As the digital revolution washes over the news media industries, journalism professionals as well as educators are trying to keep their heads above water by trying to meet the needs of a new paradigm. Newspapers have developed Web sites, embraced "public journalism," experimented with reporting teams or launched studies on ways to regain lost credibility. Meanwhile, broadcasters have formed cable and online alliances, expanded "tabloid journalism" and broadened cults of personalities.

In education, programs of journalism and mass communication have sought to keep pace with change in the same way they have since early this century: new skills courses in computer use, Web design, online reporting and new-media-oriented integrated marketing. What is being overlooked, however, is teaching student journalists ways to be ready for change itself.

In a recent Columbia Journalism Review poll of senior journalists, a third of them said the quality of people entering the field is worse than 10 years ago. The reason, most said, wasn't the lack of technical knowledge. In fact, today's recruits were said to be much more skilled in gathering and sorting of information. But a common theme of the survey was that the newcomers do not have a basic grasp of history, public affairs and economic issues. More than half of the respondents said it was "harder than ever" to find talented new journalists, with many recruits having weak analytical and problem-solving abilities, or lacking the ability to recognize a good story (Hickey, 1999).

Media critic Jon Katz, a First Amendment scholar at the Freedom Forum, has observed that "journalism has been asleep at the switches. This is not simply a story about technology, but it's a revolutionary change in society and culture and architecture of the world (Kees, 1999)." Newspaper executive Frank Batten Sr. has warned that "we need people in our organizations who are innovators -- people who will stick their necks out and take risks (Batten, 1998)."

But where can mass communications programs turn to for training that fosters this innovative journalist? The answer may lie in a field that, even more than journalism, has been on the fringes of academia: futures studies. In a 1932 BBC broadcast, British writer H. G. Wells broached the same idea:

> It seems an odd thing to me that though we have thousands and thousands of professors and hundreds of thousands of students working on the records of the past, there is not a single person anywhere who takes a whole-time job of estimating the future consequences of new inventions and devices. There is not a single Professor of Foresight in the world. But why shouldn't there be? All these things, these new inventions and new powers, come crowding along, every one is fraught with consequences, and yet it is only after something has hit us hard that we set about dealing with it (Wells, 1987).

In the decades of the 1960s and 1970s, two fields seemed destined to be joined together in leading democratic societies' version of the Great Leap Forward: the modern field of futures studies and an aggressive "new journalism," imbued with a freshened mission to be the watchdog and agenda-setter for a chaotic, changing world. Newly minted "futurists" developed creative foresight research methodologies while founding independent institutes and setting up futures-oriented university courses -- with an eye to the creation of a whole new transdisciplinary academic field. In the U.S., as states set up "commissions on the year 2000" -- heavily covered and in some cases even facilitated by newspapers -- news organizations and journalism schools

conducted intensive studies to chart their roles for the future.

Thirty years later, as we approach the millennium, and the implications of Alvin Toffler's Future Shock (1971) have become clear, futures studies has grown into a valued tool for strategic business planners, government and non-government organizations, and many areas of the social sciences. Yet despite the need for reporters and editors who can inject more foresight into the news, the growth of futures-oriented journalism curricula seems to be dead in the water, if not in retreat.

An online search was made in early 1999 of course schedules of American schools of journalism and communications with graduate programs. While schools are beginning to offer a range of courses in the uses of "new media" and computer software tools, none were found that are dedicated to envisioning the forces shaping the news media in the 21st century and to developing ways for journalists to use foresight methods – not only in understanding the new information field and their role in it, but to better serve society's need for context in coping with dramatic and disruptive change.

For Everette Dennis (1997), who as dean of the University of Oregon School of Journalism in 1984 helped create The Oregon Report on curriculum change, this is not surprising. "We have moved from utopianism to fear of the negative consequences of the future," Dennis has said. "We are not being very thoughtful about change. There is a profound backlash now in opposition to change -- anti-intellectual, anti-research."

The purpose of this paper is to offer an overview of futures studies, to outline aspects of foresight that have direct benefits for the field of journalism, to show that news practitioners and educators alike have recognized a need for futures thinking, and to explore the reasons for the seeming neglect of foresight courses in the curriculum.

Roots of Futures Studies

While a comprehensive history of futures studies and the depth of its methodology is beyond the scope of this review, a basic understanding is necessary lest it be misunderstood as

being on the level of fortune-telling. In his definitive overview, The Study of the Future (1977), Edward Cornish, founder of the World Futures Society, has charted the roots to such works as Thomas More's Utopia in the 16th century, Sir Francis Bacon's New Atlantis a century later, and Jules Verne's Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea in 1870 (p. 54-63).

But the modern concept of futures analysis is generally acknowledged to have had its birth in 1948, when the RAND Corporation for national security studies was established with the financial backing of the Ford Foundation. As the first relatively independent "think tank," free to speculate on a host of "way out" ideas, RAND indirectly gave birth to a host of other futurist organizations such as Herman Kahn's Hudson Institute (Cornish, p. 84). By the 1960s, RAND researchers had added non-military projects to their agenda and developed the methods of scenario-building, computer simulations, technological forecasting, the Delphi technique and systems analysis (Bell, 1996, p. 7). Meanwhile, In Europe, former French journalist Bertrand de Jouvenel used Ford Foundation money to launch a project in 1960 called *Futuribles*. His now-classic work, The Art of Conjecture (1964), provided a philosophical and humanistic counterbalance to the science-based futurists at RAND. Also in 1964, Marshall McLuhan's Understanding Media opened the door to new ways of thinking about media effects on culture and the economy.

In the best-selling Future Shock by Toffler (another former journalist) sparked a wave of national interest in futurism that was bolstered by The Limits to Growth (1972). This book that helped spawn the modern environmentalist movement was the first and most influential report by the Club of Rome, an organization founded by Italian industrialist Aurelio Peccei and Alexander King, who was then director for science, technology and education at the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. Using global computer models, the authors of The Limits to Growth ignited an international uproar with fears that, unless changes were made, both population and industrial growth would halt in the next century at the latest (Bell 1997, p. 40).

Another futurist pioneer whose name will be familiar to mass communications researchers is political scientist Harold Lasswell, who developed theories of propaganda and public opinion

formation in the 1920s and 1930s ("Who says what to whom through what medium with what effect?") (Baran & Davis, 1995, p. 67-69). Wendell Bell of Yale, an early sociological futurist himself, has credited Lasswell with laying the groundwork for establish futures studies as a research discipline with an intellectual investigation process he called "developmental analysis" (Bell 1997, p. 49-50).

Trying to Define Futures Studies

What exactly is futures studies? Bell has pointed out in his two-volume Foundations of Futures Studies (1997) that even what to call this cross-disciplinary field is a matter of debate. Nothing that the Americans prefer "futures studies" while Europeans have a liking for "prospective studies," Bell has said other votes have been cast for *futures research*, *futures analysis*, *futuristics*, *forecasting*, *futurology*, *prognostics*, *futurics* and *futuribles* (p. 68-70). Nevertheless, Bell has outlined the major tasks of futures studies with which most futurists would agree: The study of "possible" and "probable" futures, not only what is but what could be under specified contingencies, the study of images of the future that people use to try to adapt to what they envision, the study of the knowledge and ethical foundations of futures studies, interpreting the past and orienting the present, integrating knowledge and values for designing social action, increasing democratic participation in designing the future, and communicating and advocating particular images of the future (pp. 75-96).

And where, the reader may be asking, are the predictions? Certainly, such practitioners such as faith Popcorn or John "Megatrends" Naisbitt may lead one to conclude that the main function of futurists is to make predictions. But Richard Slaughter, founder of the Futures Studies Centre in Australia, argues that futures people take a risk when they try to foretell events. In The Foresight Principle (1995), he has noted:

> Predictions have been widely misunderstood, but they have two key uses. First, they can be applied to technical or physical systems which can be measured and understood. . . . Second, predictions play a ubiquitous and informal role in everyday life.

> Social systems are just too complex to be approached in this way. . . . Furthermore, any successful social predictions would logically rule out the active role of human beings as agents and creators of history. If accurate prediction were possible, there would be no choices and hence no point in futures study (p. 31).

Slaughter has argued that the whole point of futures studies "is not to predict but to understand alternatives. This understanding provides a decision context from which emerge options and choices (p. 33)."

Futures Studies and Journalism

It would be hard to scan Bell's tasks of futures studies and not find close agreement with the tenets of journalism, both the libertarian and communitarian models. Even No. 9 -- where the reference to advocacy may raise the hackles of the traditional journalist who is antagonistic toward "civic journalism" -- can find common ground with the long-time agenda-setting role given to the newspaper editorial page.

Those familiar with the watershed work, Four Theories of the Press (1963), will recognize echoes of Bell's list in Ted Peterson's description of the first three of what he has called the six tasks of the press under both the social responsibility and libertarian theories:

> (1) Servicing the political system by providing information, discussion and debate on public affairs; (2) enlightening the public so as to make it capable of self-government; (3) safeguarding the rights of the individual by serving as a watchdog against government; (4) servicing the economic system . . .; (5) providing entertainment; (6) maintaining its own financial self-sufficiency so as to be free from the pressures of special interests. (p. 74).

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Likewise, the Hutchins Commission's 1947 list of requirements for a free and responsible press seems to embrace foresight values in the call for "vigorous editorial leadership, by presenting and clarifying the goals and values of society (p. 183)."

Edmund Lambeth, in Committed Journalism (1986), has quoted John Hughes, former editor of the Christian Science Monitor, as declaring that "a newspaper must come up with the facts, the ideas, the *alternatives*, on which solutions to problems can be based (p. 131)." In making a case for "community journalism," Lambeth has pointed out that "a just society is one in which the well-being of many depends on equitable public and private judgments reached over a broad expanse of human activity . . . . Failure by the press to develop the competence to cover such fields is itself a breach of responsibility (p. 177)."

On the other side of the debate, John C. Merrill, Lambeth's colleague at the University of Missouri and a long-time advocate for the libertarian perspective, in The Imperative of Freedom (1974) has expressed disagreement with former Nieman Fellows curator Louis Lyons regarding the need for journalists with a capacity to learn -- who can "discover what is outside our reach and . . . bring it within our ken." Unfortunately, according to Merrill, journalism education generally "is becoming more and more specialized, inward, parochial and conformist (p. 141.)"

A Journalism Values Handbook (1996) produced by the American Society of Newspaper Editors examined in detail those core values that it said must be reinvigorated in order for newspapers "to find their way back to a respected place in a community." The report called for

coverage that provides background, context and perspective, that frames and illuminates important issues, and that stimulates discussion about public concerns and helps people see *possibilities for moving forward* (p. 7)."

Michael Schudson, in The Power of News (1995), has observed that Walter Lippmann's gloomy view of democracy would have "a government at one end, a mass of citizens at the other end, and nothing in between except perhaps the press as a conduit of information." Such "realistic" democratic pictures, Schudson has said, seem to close off any concept of change. He would have the news media assume a kind of schizophrenia: to "act as if classical democracy were within reach and simultaneously to work as if a large, informed and involved electorate were not possible." In one case, the media can help readers arrive at a political understanding that shows the range of thinking and the areas of compromise. And even in the cases where an involved electorate does not exist, journalists can act as stand-ins, holding authority responsible to publicly agreed-upon goals (p. 211-223).

From these perspectives, then, it can be seen that foresight skills uphold the highest aspirations of journalism as public service. But even in the area of modern media management, where top newsroom directors have taken roles in shaping marketing and profit strategies, futures-thinking is a vital tool. In The Future of Management (1996), French business executive Robert Salmon has noted the decline of analytical reasoning -- that the more knowledge expands, the more we must acquire a variety of viewpoints, use alternative conceptual tools and enlarge the scope of our consciousness.

> The future belongs to those who are able to shift from analysis to synthetic vision, from conceptual reasoning to polysemous intelligence, and who master the skills of systemic thinking. Such a logic of the totality views all phenomena as the result of interacting networks of independent structures. It implies not only an interdisciplinary approach, but also a revolution in mental frameworks through which the individual begins to consider himself an integral part of a whole rather than an autonomous element (p. 172-174).

Assessing a Role for Foresight in Journalism Education

Futures studies most often have come into use at journalism and communications schools as ways to analyze curriculum revision. In 1979, the faculty at the University of Missouri produced a comprehensive report that included not only a wide-ranging scan of information on the future of the field, but also a survey of experts from inside and outside journalism. The Report of the Communications Future Committee, in which the authors shrugged at the "limits of reliability of any predictions of social or economic trends," seems nearly 20 years later to have been perceptively on target (p. 19).

Several respondents pointed toward futures thinking as crucial elements for journalism education. Roger D'Aprix, then manager of employee communications for Xerox, urged communicators to see themselves as agents of change, "sensitive to society's new directions and what this means to their organization's future." Nicholas Rudd of the Young & Rubicam advertising agency advised the committee: "If you believe Alvin Toffler, and in this business we do, [the ability to learn how to learn] will become increasingly important in dealing with the

accelerated pace of change." Lee Hills, editorial chairman of Knight Ridder Newspapers, noted that "most journalism schools prepare their students to operate under conditions that existed in the last decade," but they "should be helping students now to understand those complex issues that are sure to be critical ones in the decades ahead (p. 4-70)."

A more widely circulated project was the University of Oregon's Planning for Curricular Change in Journalism Education (1984), known as The Oregon Report. Spotlighting the bland sameness of the programs at journalism schools, the report noted a lack of willingness to "grapple with either the conceptual or practical ramifications of an information society." It called for the integration of new knowledge from the worlds of scholarship and professional practice into the course of study, and for recognition of and action on technological change in industry and society (p. 33-89).

More recently, in Winds of Change: Challenges Confronting Journalism Education (1996), a comprehensive study funded by the Freedom Forum, Betty Medsger has described journalism education as going through a profound identity crisis. The former chair of the journalism department at San Francisco State University has offered a detailed formula for "rescuing" journalism education. Included in her list of recommendations: "Teach in ways that help students develop as problem-spotters of the issues of both the society they will cover and the profession they will enter. Teach them to be constant explorers beyond the world of their own experience, knowledge, interest and comfort . . . Prepare students to . . . anticipate and experiment with new methods. Prepare them to be innovative thinkers and planners about the larger issues that affect

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journalism (p. 68)."

In a Scholastic Update article charting the future of education, William McGowan (1994) has quoted futurist Toffler as calling for a massive overhaul of the industrial-based education system in order to teach young people how to be adaptable. "Having a skills is not the key to the game anymore; it is having the right skill at the right time, which is more complex." In the same article, Wired magazine executive editor Kevin Kelly expanded on Toffler's view: "The skill to develop will be the ability to be at ease in a changing environment. . . . The only master left is the master explorer, the master learner, who can master the ability to keep up with new things."

The University of Missouri's Lambeth (1993), who is director of the National Workshop on the Teaching of Ethics in the Classroom, has written that "social, economic and technological changes are now sweeping the nation in ways that force us to rethink the way we introduce mass media to our students. Often depending on their disciplines, academics are either fomenters, mediators, critics of, or recluses from, such change. The later would be the more dangerous course for journalism education (p. 18)."

Alexander King (1975), one of the founders of the futurist Club of Rome, facing the question of whether futures studies is a suitable subject for academia, has said that the answer "... seems to be to be very simple. If, as I believe is true, the universities are essential innovators in society through the development of new concepts and methods of thought, they can hardly avoid taking up the challenge of exploration of the future which is being forced upon us by the exigencies of our times (p. 43)."

Toffler, Bell and political scientist James Dator began teaching courses in the future in the mid-1960s, and now there are classes at elementary and high schools. At the university level, there are entire graduate programs in futures studies. More than 100 periodicals are dedicated to serious futures topics; associations of futurists can be found around the world; nearly all major corporations have some formal system of technological forecasting or long-range planning; and hundreds of consulting futurists are in high demand for speaking and for applied futures research (Bell 1997, p. 61).

In the news industry, the McCormick Tribune Foundation's Future of Journalism initiative is helping to find visionary programs through such organizations as New Directions for News and the Radio and Television News Directors Foundation. Future-oriented projects also are being sponsored by such organizations as the Pew Center for the Public and the Press, the Poynter Institute for Media Studies and the Freedom Forum's Media Studies Center. Amid this apparently strong interest in develop ways to understand and cope with change, the dearth of foresight courses in journalism and mass communications schools becomes even more noticeable.

A Search for "Professors of Foresight"

While there are many journalism educators who have an interest in the wider systemic implications of societal change as it relates to the field, and even mix some into their new media, ethics or media and society courses, focused efforts to create Kelly's "master explorer" are hard to find. In a typical application, students in the introductory graduate course in mass

communications theory at the University of Missouri read Nicholas Negroponte's Being Digital discuss the implications for journalism and write a one-page reflection paper imagining a media world of the future. At the University of North Texas, the mass communications survey course includes a session on "Mass Media Tomorrow." Such nibbles are better than nothing, but don't go far in satisfying the news practitioner's need for foresight skills.

"There is a module here and there, but it's pretty thin," Dennis (1997) -- who as former head of the Freedom Forum's Media Studies Center was able to observe many journalism programs -- has said. He has recalled being a young professor at Kansas State University during the birth of the futures movement in the 1960s. "There was a wave of interest in futures courses in that period, but as we count down to the millennium, what interest there is today is more negative than hopeful. Thought about adaptation and change is almost all based on the negative history of technology and the writings of fanciful futurists."

Dennis has seen "an almost virulent anti-intellectualism in the field right now -- a craving for an industry as it exists today, and a desperate attempt to find new markets for old technologies." Noting that innovative research and development has almost no home in journalism and most journalism schools, Dennis has observed that "curriculum is determined by politics, ideology and grounded reasoning. It's getting little support from an industry that shuns R&D incubators because it doesn't have the patience to wait for a payoff. The result often is cutbacks and consolidations at universities, and the hanging onto old courses." Dennis, now at Fordham University's Graduate School of Business, has looked toward business schools as likelier homes

for futures studies: "They're doing serious work with market trends and demographics."

R. Dean Mills (1997), dean of the University of Missouri School of Journalism, has agreed, pointing to the launching of the Center for the Study of Organizational Change within Missouri's School of Public Administration. Mills has said that "with the limits on what we can do with our curriculum, we are focusing on the impact of the new technologies, and to how they are related to work in journalism." Nevertheless, the faculty at Missouri has approved the teaching of an experimental course, "Journalism and the Future," that is to include an exploration of the transformation of the meanings of "news" as well as the adaptation of futures studies research tools to journalism practice (Appendix A).

Where professors are engaged in futures teaching, it is more often than not in departments of communication rather than journalism. One of the leading models is at the University of North Dakota, where Lana Rakow (1997) wanted to create "a place to change the way the field things about changing itself." What resulted was an issues-based curriculum intended to shift away from the old categories of mass media. Within each of the core areas of community, information and technology are courses that address the future in that topic of interest (Rakow 1996, p. 11-18). "A lot of schools are trying to achieve substantive curriculum change, but it is very difficult to accomplish," Rakow has said. "Often it is talk, talk, talk, but no consensus. Or where changes are made, they are often not substantial -- just adding technology courses."

Tony Parker (1997), a professor of speech communication at Northern Arizona University, has been teaching a course called "The Future of Communication" since 1990. Its

objectives include familiarizing students with communication's role in an evolving society, developing the concept of communication as a technology-dependent metadiscipline, and to foresee evolving practices of media professionals. Parker has said that the course grew out of his own interests, and that it has found a niche in the curriculum despite having few other models. "In 1994, my students surveyed selected communications programs in 50 states and found only one other similar program -- a 'Communications in the Future' course at the University of South Florida." Parker has helped organize the Speech Communication Association's Committee on the Future for networking within the field.

At Roosevelt University's School of Communication, John McClelland (1997) developed a "New Media and Technology" course in 1994 that includes a history of previous sea changes in media and society, as well as speculation about trends and social values. And at California State University, Sacramento, Shirley Biagi has developed a course entitled "You in the New Information Age," intended to introduce students to changes in the media industries and the social impact of those changes.

Although evidence of futures courses at journalism schools is more sparse, many educators expressed interest in learning more about ways to enhance future-thinking in their programs. Medsger (1997), who surveyed more than 400 journalism educators for Winds of Change, has said she is unaware of any foresight-oriented journalism courses, but assumes that "there are numerous teachers/scholars who think futuristically, even if they don't use that language."

Laura Hendrickson (1997) of the University of the Incarnate Word and James Tankard of the University of Texas at Austin are exploring classroom techniques for using general systems theory. "Teaching future reporters to think of news events and issues in systems terms may be one approach to expanding the news frame," they have written. Hendrickson and Tankard have suggested that understanding multiple causation of social problems, unanticipated effects of suggested policy changes, and effects on the system as a whole are ways journalists can use systems methodology.

Others are no less interested, but more cautious. Phil Meyer (1997) of the University of North Carolina has warned students in his ethics courses to be prepared for changes, but has pointed out to them that such changes are a moving target, and "I'm not so bold as to try to tell them what those changes will be. I can only suggest some possibilities and historical parallels."

The time is ripe, however, for rethinking curricular change. For reformers thinking about curricula for the future, Dennis (1997) has said that considerations of course content should include technology history, economic forecasting, cyclical trends, great forces and factors, inventions (and factors that will determine whether they stick), and audiences and population.

"I don't know whether it's because of the downsizing trend of the media industry, or whether the embracing of the present and past is due to a fear of the future," Dennis has said. "I *do* know that the new technology is a metaphor for change -- an attempt at sense-making. It's a struggle to absorb new notions of information, and whether 'news' itself will survive in the information arena."

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Appendix A

JOURNALISM AND THE FUTURE
Proposed course: Journalism 430 (Topics in Journalism)
University of Missouri School of Journalism

Description:

This course will focus on the journalist as futurist, on the alternative futures of the news industry itself, and on giving journalists the tools to meet the challenges of a transformational society. It is the proposition of the course design that, in considering the role of the news media in a rapidly changing world, the highest value will attach to the journalist who is a leader rather than a follower, is an explorer rather than a chronicler, a change agent rather than a change victim.

To that end, it is the intention of this course to help prepare budding journalists for careers in which they are able to recognize emerging changes and the macro forces driving them; are able to comprehensively and coherently convey the possible meanings and consequences of these changes to their audiences; and to recognize the need for – and be able to respond to – continuous innovation in their own field.

Outline:

Phase One of the course will include a basic grounding in future-thinking, including the general principles of futures studies (with methods including visioning exercises, emerging issues analysis, systems theory and scenario-building) and the generation of an idea for a future-oriented project for the *Columbia Missourian*. Students with interest in producing a digital or broadcast version may be accommodated with prior approval of the instructors.

Phase Two will introduce students to future-thinkers from inside the School of Journalism (media convergence, technological innovation, corporatization, changing ethics/values and the viability of the advertising model) as well as experts from elsewhere in the university or Columbia community (i.e. electronic justice, nanotechnology, virtual elections, interactive arts).

Phase Three will include the completion of the future-oriented news project, including an evaluation of its process and effects. At the end of this course, participants should have a deeper understanding of the dynamics of change in society, in the world of their readers and viewers, and in their own professional and personal lives.

Requirements:

The 3-credit-hour course is designed for graduate students. Advanced undergraduates may be admitted with instructor approval. Prerequisite: Journalism 306, Broadcast II or the equivalent. In addition to completion of a major project, students will be expected to do readings on futures studies and the future of journalism, as well as regular one-page reflection papers related to the readings and guest lecturers. Also, participants will keep a personal "log" of mini-scenarios of the future that occur to them during the course of the semester.

It is intended that this elective class will meet once a week, in the evenings, to allow full absorption of the future-thinking process as well as to avoid conflict with required courses.

Texts and readings:

Wendell Bell, Foundations of Futures Studies, Vol. 1. New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1997.

Jon Katz, Virtuous Reality . New York: Random House, 1997.

Readings will consist of numerous and diverse -- but mostly short -- articles across a broad range of future-thinking, both inside and outside the field of the news media and selected for variety, relevance and timeliness. Also, each class member will be asked to read a book or view a videotape or CD-ROM about a future-oriented topic selected from a list, or of their own

choice (with instructor approval). Students will individually critique the work and lead a brief class discussion.

Grading:

Attendance and class participation	30%
Reflection papers	20%
Book review/report	10%
Scenario log	10%
Futuristic news project	30%
	100%

All assignments must be completed to pass this course.

Sample Schedule:

Week 1

What futures studies is, and is not. Visioning exercise leading to initial brainstorming and proposals for a future-oriented news project. One-page reflection paper. Text: Wendell Bell, Foundations of Futures Studies, Vol. 1, 1-164. Other sample readings:

- Eleonora Barbieri Masini, "Why Think about the Future Today: Principles and Concepts," in Why Futures Studies? London: Grey Seal, 1993; 1-14. *(Motivations of futures studies.)*
- Allen Tough, "Ways to Develop the Knowledge Base of Futures Studies," in R.A. Slaughter (Ed.), New Thinking for a New Millennium. London: Routledge, 1996; 179-184. *(Discusses how can we get from here to a satisfactory future.).*
- Richard A. Slaughter, "Looking Forward," in The Foresight Principle: Cultural Recovery in the 21st Century. Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1995; 29-44. *(Asks what can we know about the future?)*

Week 2

Overview of dominant images of the future: Critique of the images, and individual scenario-building exercises. One-page reflection paper. Selection of topic for class project. Text: Wendell Bell, Foundations of Futures Studies, Vol. 1, 165-317. Sample readings:

- Jim Dator, "Loose Connections: A Vision of a Transformational Society," in Visions of Desirable Societies, Eleonora Masini (Ed.). New York: Pergamon Press, 1983; 25-45. *(Analysis of the difference between eutopia and utopia.)*
- John Petersen, "New Era Requires New Thinking," in The Road to 2015: Profiles of the Future. Corte Madera, Calif.: Waite Group Press, 1994; 3-13. *(The explosion of*

information is changing who we are.)

- Denis Loveridge, "Values and Futures," in Futures Research: New Directions, Harold A. Linstone and W.H. Clive Simmonds (Eds.). London: Addison-Wesley, 1997; 53-64. *(The role of the individual is vital to futures thinking.)*

Week 3

Methods of forecasting: Environmental scanning exercise, culminating in individual analyses of emerging issues. One-page reflection paper. Brainstorming of news project strategies including, photos, graphics, design, online elements/links. Sample readings:

- Peter Schwartz, "Steps to Developing Scenarios," in The Art of the Long View. New York: Currency, 1991; 226-234. *(A scenario primer.)*
- Michael Marien, "Scanning: An Imperfect Activity in an Era of Fragmentation and Uncertainty," Futures Research Quarterly (Fall 1991), 82-90. *(Several definitions of "scanning.")*
- Joseph P. Martino, "Technological Forecasting: An Introduction," The Futurist (July-August 1993), 13-16. *(A research scientist shows how it's done.)*

Week 4

Alternate futures relating to futuristic news projects: Guest reporter or editor who has done such a project. Written reports on strategies. Selected readings related to such projects.

Week 5

Journalism change within the larger context: Two guest speakers on societal transformation and basic general systems theory. One-page reflection paper. Oral project reports. Text: Jon Katz, Virtuous Reality. Other sample readings:

- Pamela McCorduck & Nancy Ramsey, "The Official Future Will Not Take Place," in The Futures of Women: Scenarios for the 21st Century. Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1996:; 1-20. (*Women in the 21st century are emblems and agents of change.)*
- Esther Dyson, George Gilder, George Keyworth, Alvin Toffler, "Technopolitics: The Magna Carta for the Knowledge Age." Internet WWW page, at URL: http://www.feedmag.com/95.05magna1.html (version current at Aug. 8, 1997). *(Revising Second Wave attitudes for a Third Wave world.)*
- Kenneth Boulding, "Expecting the Unexpected: The Uncertain Future of Knowledge and Technology," in The Future: Images and Processes. Thousand Oaks: Sage, 1995; 7-25. *(Mechanical, pattern, equilibrium and evolutionary systems.)*

Week 6

Change within the journalism context, Part 1: Two guest speakers on news technology,

and on news values/ethics. One-page reflection paper. Oral project reports. Sample readings:

- Jack Fuller, "Helping People Master Their World," in News Values: Ideas for an Information Age. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996; 184-195. *(How "news values" can continue to guide journalists even in a more competitive marketplace.)*
- Daniel C. Hallin, "The Passing of the 'High Modernism' of American Journalism," Journal of Communication 42/3 (Summer 1992), 14-25. *(Changes under way already are shaking up the profession of journalism.)*
- Everett E. Dennis, "The Media and Public Trust." Address, 32nd Anniversary Conference of the National Press Council of the R.O.C., World Trade Center, Taipei, Taiwan. (Sept. 2, 1995). *(What the news media must do to win public confidence.)*
- Katherine Fulton, "A New Agenda for Journalism," in Nieman Reports (Spring 1994), 15-18. *(Staking out the role of news in the emerging technological world.)*
- Lou Ureneck, "Expert Journalism." Nieman Reports (Winter 1994): pp. 6-13. *(Reframing the idea of objectivity.)*

Week 7

Exploring alternative futures, Part 1: Three speakers on the possible future of politics, of health/medicine, and of international relations. One-page reflection paper. Oral project reports. Sample readings:

- Gerald Celente, Trend Tracking: The System to Profit From Today's Trends. New York: Warner Books, 1991; 3-18. *(Techniques for analyzing emerging trends.)*
- Marvin Cetron & Owen Davies, "Medicine for the New Millennium," in Probable Tomorrows: How Science and Technology Will Transform Our Lives in the Next Twenty Years. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997; 197-228. *(The first decade of the 21st century will be one of the most productive in the history of medicine.)*
- Johan Galtung & Richard C. Vincent, "Global Problems and News Communication," in Global Glasnost: Toward a New World Information and Communication Order? Cresskill, N.J.: Hampton Press, 1992, 1-29. *(Major trends in the structure and process of international news flow.)*

Week 8

Assessment week: Students meet individually with instructors at prearranged times to review rough drafts of class project. Scenario "logs" to be submitted for a non-graded mid-term critique by the instructors, and returned.

Week 9

Individual book, video or CD-ROM critiques and discussions.

Week 10

Exploring alternative futures, Part 2. Three speakers on the possible future of the government, of demographics, of science. One-page reflection paper. Oral project reports. Sample readings:

- Donella H. Meadows, Dennis L. Meadows, Jorgen Randers, "Overshoot But Not Collapse," in Beyond the Limits: Confronting Global Collapse, Envisioning a Sustainable Future. Post Mills, Vt.: Chelsea Green Publishing, 1992. pp. 218-236. *(Assessing the challenge of population growth and environmental sustainibility.)*
- David Osborne & Ted Gaebler, "Community-Owned Government: Empowering Rather Than Serving," in Reinventing Government: How the Entrepreneurial Spirit is Transforming the Public Sector. New York: Plume/Penguin, 1993; pp. 49-75. *(Exploring possible new forms of governance.)*
- Kevin Kelly, " The Structure of Organized Change," in Out of Control: The New Biology of Machines, Social Systems and the Economic World. Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1994; pp. 352-364. *(Machines are becoming biological, and the biological is becoming engineered.)*

Week 11

Individual book, video or CD-ROM critiques and discussions.

Week 12

Change within the journalism context, Part 2. Two speakers on the future of advertising as a news-media profit source, and on ethnic diversity in content and the news workplace. One-page reflection papers. First drafts of project stories due. Sample readings:

- James B. Twitchell, "Takes a Licking, But Keeps on Ticking: The Future of Adcult," in Adcult USA: The Triumph of Advertising in American Culture. New York: Columbia University Press, 1996, 229-253. *(Why advertising has become the dominant meaning-making system in American culture.)*
- Brooke Shelby Biggs, "Aren't We Precious." Internet WWW page at URL: http://www.packet.com/packet/biggs/nc_today.html (version current at March 18, 1997). *(Elitism could kill the online media.)*
- E.J. Dionne Jr., "No News is Good News: Why Americans Hate the Press," in They Only Look Dead: Why Progressives Will Dominate the Next Political Era. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996; 231-262. *(The problems of the news media are systematic, not merely the result of technological change.)*
- LynNell Hancock, "The Haves and Have-Nots," in S. Biagi & M. Kern-Foxworth (Eds.), Facing Difference: Race, Gender and Mass Media. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Pine Forge Press, 1997; 261-266. *(Will computer technology ease or widen race divisions in the U.S.?)*

Week 13

Exploring alternative futures, Part 3: Three speakers on the possible future of business/economy, of arts/entertainment, and of the environment. One-page reflection papers. Return of stories to students with critiques. Sample readings:

- Lester C. Thurow, "An Era of Man-Made Brainpower Industries," in The Future of Capitalism: How Today's Economic Forces Shape Tomorrow's World. New York: Penguin, 1996; 65-87. *(Understanding the dynamics of the new, post-cold-war economy.)*
- Neil Postman, "The Huxleyan Warning," in Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business. New York: Penguin, 1985; 155-163. *(How politics, religion, news, athletics, education and commerce are being transformed into adjuncts of show business.)*
- Mark Dowie, "The Fourth Wave," in Losing Ground: American Environmentalism at the Close of the Twentieth Century. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1995; 205-257. *(New directions for the environmental movement).*

Week 14

Assessment week: Students meet individually with instructors to discuss editing, layouts, photos, graphics, online elements/links, final story revisions.

Week 15

Evaluation week: Class participation in a paradigm-challenging, role-playing exercise. Discussion of how future-oriented journalism can provide a service to a democratic society. Consideration of methods of scientifically assessing the impact of the futuristic project on readers.

Week 16

Culmination: Completion of news project editing and layouts. Turn in "future logs."